UNITED NATIONS **S**

Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/PRST/1997/50
6 November 1997
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH, FRENCH AND RUSSIAN

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

At the 3830th meeting of the Security Council, held on 6 November 1997 in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in Georgia", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council has considered the report of the Secretary-General concerning the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia, of 28 October 1997 (S/1997/827).

"The Security Council regrets that, despite strenuous efforts to reactivate the peace process, there has been no visible progress on the key issues of the settlement - the future political status of Abkhazia and the permanent return of refugees and displaced persons.

"The Security Council attaches particular importance to the more active role for the United Nations in the peace process, and encourages the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to that end, with the assistance of the Russian Federation as facilitator, and with the support of the group of Friends of the Secretary-General on Georgia and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The Council calls upon the parties to cooperate fully with these efforts.

"In this context, the Security Council regrets that the adjourned high-level meeting on the conflict in Geneva under the aegis of the United Nations did not resume in October as initially planned. It welcomes the intention of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to resume this meeting on 17 November to map out the areas where concrete political progress could be made, to take forward discussion of social and economic issues in support of a comprehensive settlement of the conflict, and to address the issue of return of refugees. The Council calls upon all concerned to do their utmost for the resumption of this meeting with the constructive engagement in particular of the Abkhaz side.

"The Security Council commends the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Special Representative aimed at achieving a comprehensive settlement of the conflict, including on the political status of Abkhazia

within the State of Georgia, respecting fully the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia, and the efforts undertaken by the Russian Federation as facilitator, in particular the initiative put forward by the President of the Russian Federation on 1 August 1997 and the Georgian-Abkhaz negotiations held in Sukhumi on 9 and 10 September with the participation of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. The Council welcomes the meeting of the President of Georgia and Mr. Ardzinba in Tbilisi on 14 August 1997 facilitated by the Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, and the continuation of direct dialogue between the parties and calls upon them to intensify the search for a peaceful solution by further expanding their contacts.

"The Security Council further encourages the Secretary-General to take such steps as are necessary, in cooperation with the parties, to ensure a prompt and safe return of the refugees and displaced persons to their homes, with the assistance of all relevant international organizations.

"The Security Council welcomes the decision of the Council of Heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States mentioned in the report to extend the mandate of the Collective Peacekeeping Forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS peacekeeping force) until 31 January 1998.

"The Security Council welcomes the good cooperation between the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) and the CIS peacekeeping force and their efforts to promote stabilization of the situation in the zone of conflict. The Council calls upon the parties to cooperate fully with UNOMIG and the CIS peacekeeping force.

"The Security Council expresses concern at the continuing violations of the Moscow Agreement of 14 May 1994 on a Ceasefire and Separation of Forces (S/1994/583, annex I) and calls upon the parties to ensure the full implementation of this agreement.

"The Security Council remains deeply concerned at the continuing unstable and tense security conditions in the Gali and Zugdidi sectors and in the Kodori valley. The Council strongly condemns the kidnapping of personnel of UNOMIG and the CIS peacekeeping force.

"The Security Council also condemns the continued laying of mines, including more sophisticated types of mines which has already caused several deaths and injuries among the civilian population and the peacekeepers and observers of the international community. It calls upon the parties to take all measures in their power to prevent mine-laying and intensified activities by armed groups and to cooperate fully with UNOMIG and the CIS peacekeeping force in order to honour their commitments to ensure the safety and the freedom of movement of all personnel of the United Nations, the CIS peacekeeping force and international humanitarian organizations.

"The Security Council supports the additional measures envisaged by the Secretary-General in the report to improve the safety of UNOMIG personnel and to create conditions for the effective performance of its mandate.

"The Security Council welcomes the continued efforts by the United Nations agencies and humanitarian organizations to address the urgent needs of those suffering most from the consequences of the conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia, in particular internally displaced persons, encourages further contributions to that end, and reiterates its encouragement to States to contribute to the voluntary fund in support of the implementation of the Moscow Agreement and/or for humanitarian aspects including demining, as specified by donors.

"The Security Council reminds the parties that the ability of the international community to assist them depends on their political will to resolve the conflict through dialogue and mutual accommodation."